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Dear Friend,

Last week, I had the privilege of traveling to Iraq as part of a Congressional Delegation (CODEL) with Veterans Affairs Secretary James Peake to see first-hand the medical care being provided to our fighting men and women.

During the trip, I visited the Kuwaiti Emergency Medical Facility, Medical Aid Stations in Baghdad, the Balad Theatre Support Hospital in Iraq, and the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. I received operational briefs from commanders on the ground, met with U.S. troops, and participated in office calls with General David Petraeus and the U.S. Embassy.

I saw the incredible job that our fighting men and women are doing under very difficult circumstances. Our entire nation should be grateful for their service.

I was especially impressed with the medical personnel who are working constantly to make sure that our injured soldiers get the best possible care. From my visits to medical facilities in Kuwait, Iraq, and Germany, I saw the great pride they took in caring for our wounded warriors.

I had the chance to meet with several injured troops—including ones from Illinois. I visited burn victims, those suffering from IED wounds, and triple amputees. I was extremely humbled by their courage.

I was also able to more closely examine the ongoing war effort in Iraq. While the surge of U.S. troops has had some limited tactical success, I did not see any evidence to suggest it has helped the Iraqis find the political solution necessary to establish peace in the country and stability in the region. Our troops won the war. It is time for the Iraqi government to win the peace.

I still strongly support a responsible redeployment of our troops. The Iraqi government will not stand up until they feel the pressure to do so. A timetable for withdrawal can apply that pressure.

My visit abroad reinforced my commitment to our troops and our veterans. I will continue to spend every day fighting so our servicemen and women get the care they deserve both on the battlefield and here at home.

Sincerely,

Phil Hare
Member of Congress

PHOTO: General Petraeus and I



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Moline, IL 61265
Phone: (309) 793-5760
Fax: (309) 762-9193

Galesburg Office

261 N. Broad, #5
Galesburg, IL 61401
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